Infinite Game Music Vol.8

Released 15 August 2007

INFINITE GAME MUSIC VOL.8
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Town Music concept by Stephen Tanner. Graphical Art by Dmauro.

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There are two kinds of cities in video games.

In role-playing games, towns are generally a safe place where you can rest at the inn, buy equipment, and talk to people to get quests. These are tranquil villages with few problems, except perhaps a wandering townsperson who keeps blocking the way into the item shop.

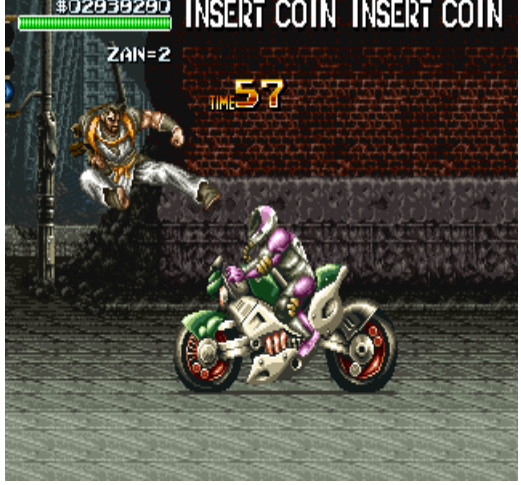
At the other extreme, many fighting or shooting games are set in a big bad city where you battle gangs of criminals, or ninjas, or robots, or criminal ninja robots. As they say in Armed Police Batrider: **WELCOME TO VIOLENT CITY**. You might visit the subway, the docks, or the sewers. Scenes are often set at night, the better to show off the cold electric lights of the city skyline.

The theme for this volume of Infinite Game Music is Town Music. We gathered a variety of moods, so the music ranges from cheery walking-around-town tunes to intense drum-heavy tracks set in a futuristic, decaying metropolis.

High-res versions of the paper covers are included in the album download.

Download Infinite Game Music Vol.8 (47.9 MB)

01. Undercover Cops	Track 6
	Undercover Cops is a quirky, tough brawler reminiscent of Final Fight, obscure outside of Japan. The overall mood of the game is ominous, hostile, graffiti-covered city. But it also includes some goofy touches - you get to hit bad guys with giant fish, and restore health by picking up baby chickens. The gritty, industrial graphics that Irem does so well help set the mood. In this track slow, sprawling synthesizer melodies glide above a fast and heavy drum line. The soundtrack features many, many,



many orchestral hits.

© Irem

02. Super Mario RPG

Hard-working moles are good moles

With Super Mario RPG, Nintendo and Square experimented with building an RPG around the Super Mario Brothers and their world. The experiment was a huge success and spawned many follow-up games (particularly the Paper Mario series). The graphics are sprites but were developed through 3D rendering, an unusual look that was seen in a few SNES games (particularly the Donkey Kong Country series). This music plays in the mole village (which would, of course, be the Dwarf Village in any other Square game). The tune is short and simple, but draws in a wide variety of instruments. And, the song has one of the best names ever.

© SquareSoft/Nintendo

03. Ninja Warriors

Daddy Mulk

Stephen:
This music comes from the quirky and talented Japanese game sountrack group Zuntata. It sounds like 80's J-Pop, complete with breaks for applause, almost as though the music were a live rock concert. The voice samples add an interesting texture, although they don't form intelligible words. The koto solo at 3'15" is one of the high points.

The game itself has an unusual three-screens-wide playing field, like Taito's far more famous underwater shooter Darius. You play a cybernetic ninja, who is perhaps even cooler than the ninja from Shinobi.

Lou:
Really cool and very interesting tune. I love those voice samples that are used throughout the track as well as the applauses in the middle.

© Taito

04. Earthbound

Onett 2

Many RPGs take place in a medieval fantasy universe. But Earthbound takes place in the present-day world...mixed with paranormal elements like UFOs, the Loch Ness Monster, and psionic abilities. This bouncy tune plays in Onett (the first town, hence the "One" in the name - after Onett comes Twoson, then

Threed, then Fourside). The music captures the upbeat, off-kilter mood of the game. Earthbound includes some completely crazy tunes, like the themes for Dungeon Man or Mr. Saturn. It's unusual for a soundtrack to be so silly and so beautiful at the same time. (StarCon 2 is the only other one that springs to mind)

© Ape Studios

05. Streets of Rage 2

Go Straight (Beat Mix)

Back in elementary school, McGruff the crime dog taught us to "Take a Bite out of Crime"...and after school, we'd go play Streets of Rage to "Kick the Crap out of Crime". The Streets of Rage series is fun, and extremely tough on the harder difficulty levels. (But then, my friend would get bored and beat up on me instead of the bad guys, so maybe it's not so impossible if you cooperate). Go Straight is a very satisfying techno track, and this Beat Mix was included in the original Genesis cartridge. There are some clever stereo effects, most noticeable at the beginning.

© Sega

06. Dragon Warrior 3 (aka Dragon Quest 3)

Jipang

Once you got a boat, Dragon Warrior 3 let you explore a big open world, with many things to discover. Being turned loose to explore produced a mixture of excitement and confusion ("Where do I go now!?"). If you've played Zelda: Wind Waker, then you know the feeling.

© Enix

07. Double Dragon 3

Level X

Here's a catchy, intense tune for rushing down the street, cyclone-kicking anyone who gets in your way. There's an interesting contrast between the slow melody and the fast notes...and the break at the 20 second mark is very catchy. As in so many beat-em-up games, the biggest trick is making sure you stand just above or below enemies, then pound them as they walk onto your level...

© Technos Japan

08. Ys III

Wanderers from Ys - Redmont, the street of trading

This is a great example of a cute town theme - when you hear it, you may feel the urge to tie little ribbons around it. This version, from the Genesis, sounds a bit nicer than the SNES version. The Ys series of action RPGs has developed a cult following, more for the great soundtracks than for the gameplay or story.

© Falcom

09.Arcana (aka Cardmaster)

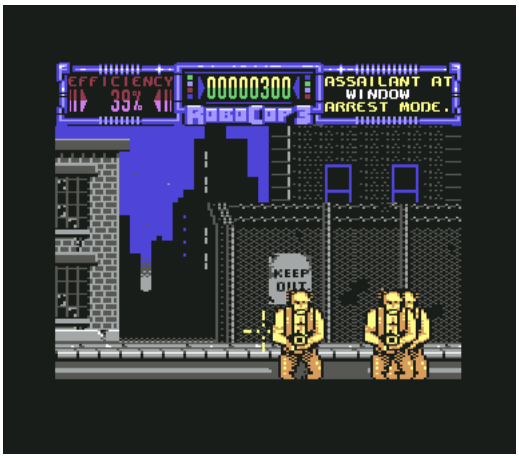
Crowded Marketplace

In Arcana, the monsters and items are depicted as playing cards. (It's interesting as an art design choice; note that this game predates the collectible card madness kicked off by Magic: The Gathering). Almost all of the game takes place in dungeon mazes, so trips to town are a welcome chance to stock up on supplies.

© Hal

10. Robocop 3

Title



Stephen:
The title tune by the insanely talented Jeroen Tel; the music was also included in the earlier Blackmail demo. Like many C64 tunes, this one takes its time, and builds up slowly to a climax. The lead doesn't enter until 1'20", and the climax comes after the three-minute mark, long after a typical frenetic NES tune would have looped.

Lou:
I like how C64 songs differs from NES songs like Stephen explains. I think this tune shows all those differences quite well. The arps, the bass line, the tempo and length of the tune, etc. I don't know if the differences exists because most C64 composers were European and NES composers were Japanese or if it was the hardware itself.

© Ocean

11. Phantasy Star

Excite Town

Most of the towns in Phantasy Star II feature this perky music. Picture your characters walking around (in single-file, this being an old-school console RPG), shopping for TRIMATES and

ESCAPIPES. The game includes several secrets in towns that are easy to miss (the professor researching Maruera leaf, the dam control tower). A trick used here, as in **many** old RPGs, is to have a "hidden" house reached by walking outside the town (but **not** far enough to jump to the overworld), then edging around the city walls.

© Sega

12. Crono Trigger

Millenial Fair Music

At the beginning of Chrono Trigger, the people of Guardia are celebrating the year 1000. This carefree music plays as Chrono and his new friend Marle wander around the fair, playing mini-games. Notice the cute vocal sample used a few times to punctuate the piece. As a side note, the Picori Festival sequence at the start of The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap is similar to the Millenial Fair sequence...possibly the designers were fans of Chrono Trigger?

© SquareSoft

13. Shantae

Bandit Town

Stephen:
From an early soundtrack by virt (Jake Kaufmann). This track, and its sweet bassline, gave me a new respect for the humle Gameboy. Shantae came out very very late in the lifetime of the Gameboy Color, and didn't make much of a splash, but it's a great little game nonetheless. It has an Arabian Nights theme, something we don't see a lot of (unless you count Prince of Persia, or the profoundly mediocre NES game The Magic of Scheherezade).

Lou:
Wow, I didn't know of this tune before Stephen's compilaition. I love **Jake**'s work and this is no exception. I can totally hear Jake's own style here but I've to say parts of the tune reminds me of chiptune music by **Role Model**. I hear influecenes from games like Doctor Mario as well as Gargoyle's Quest. Very cool tune!

© WayForward

14. Katamari Damacy

Makkana Bara to Gin Tonic

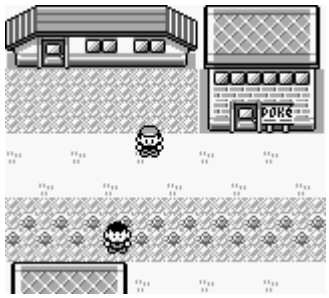
In Katamari Damacy, you roll up progressively larger objects into a ball, starting with coins and gum and moving up to sumo wrestlers and office buildings. There's a story about the King of All Cosmos in there somewhere, but mostly it's all about the relaxing, silly fun of rolling around the streets hunting for the right size stuff to glom onto. The soundtrack fits the playful mood, with some glitchy IDM, and some jazzy tunes like this

one. The katamari rampages through city blocks like a tornado, but this music is so perky that you won't feel guilty about the Godzilla-scale property damage you cause. The piano solo here has a short quote from "It Don't Mean A Thing" at around 1'55".

© Namco

15. Pokemon Red

Cerulean City



Pokemon Red, the first game of the huge Pokemon media franchise, was released back in 1996. Soon millions of kids were attempting to level up their Pikachu, or fill in the last gaps in their Pokedex. The game has a lot of cute touches; you meet a trainer whose battle cry is "I like shorts! They're comfy and easy to wear!"

© Game Freak/Nintendo

16. 7th Saga

Town Music 2

7th Saga is punishingly hard, even moreso than Phantasy Star 2. But, it has a pleasant soundtrack built around an interesting set of samples.

© Enix

17. Jumping Flash

Stage 5-1

The crop of early PlayStation games was mostly forgettable, but Jumping Flash was a very enjoyable one. Gameplay was simple - jump, double-jump, and triple-jump around 3-D levels and collect carrots while adorable music played. The music for this stage, a giant cityscape, includes bustling office noises like telephones and typewriters.

© SCEI

18. Brain Lord

Town of Arcs

Yes, the game is really called Brain Lord. It's an action game with a lot of puzzles (mostly of the box-pushing variety), similar to the PlayStation game Alundra. This

funky music plays as you stroll around Arcs, the main town.

© Enix

19. Golgo 13

Intro

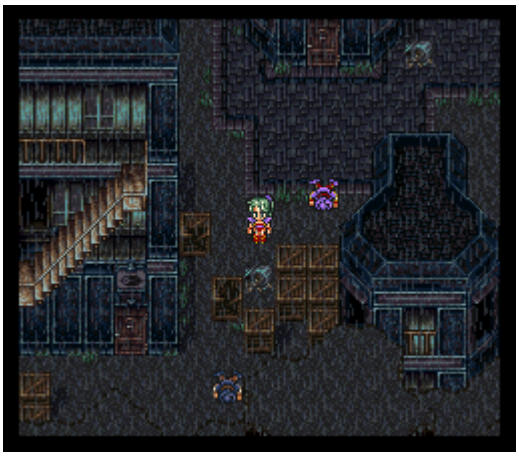
A helicopter flies in front of the New York skyline. The copter mysteriously explodes due to Foul Play...and then this tune kicks in. The first part of the bassline sounds a bit like the intro to the film Blade Runner (which also opens with views of the Big City). The opening five-note motif reappears in the crazy section around 1'10" just before the tune loops.

The game itself is an unusual mix of platform sections, "first person" shooting (while standing in place), and grid-based 3D mazes. You get to do cool things like jump-kick bullets out of the air and snipe people. Unfortunately, much of the playing time is spent s-l-o-w-l-y walking across big city areas, with lots of backtracking. (If you do play the game, note that - as in real life - having sex restores you to full hit points)

© Vic Tokai

20. Final Fantasy 3 (aka Final Fantasy 6)

Slam Shuffle



FF3's fantastic soundtrack includes almost two hours of music including styles ranging from techno tunes to a mini-opera. This music captures the sneaky atmosphere of Zozo, where everyone tells lies. The susurus of white noise represent the falling rain.

© SquareSoft

21. Xenogears

My Village is Number One

Xenogears is a PlayStation RPG that remains a cult favorite. It's an unusual mix of 2D sprites and 3D backgrounds, giant robot battles and bizarre mysticism. This tune sounds like triumphant music to play after the final boss battle as the credits roll...but it's actually just music for Fei Fong Wong to stroll

around his home town. It has a Celtic sound, and in fact, an album with Celtic arrangements of the soundtrack was released.

© SquareSoft